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HISTORIC CRIMES and MYSTERIES



THE MASSACRE AT THE MILL.

It was a hot August night in 1877, and Herr Weidig of Vogelsberg, couldn't sleep. He lay in bed abusing the climate, and wishing morning would come. Thus, being wide awake, he lost no time when he heard a frantic rapping at the outer door. He put his head out of the window and beheld a little girl at the door beneath him.

"Himmel!" he cried; "if that is not little Bertha Yungler, with nothing on but her shirt. Was ist los, mein Kind?"

Little Bertha, in a panic of terror, gasped out that her mother and brother were murdered, and the house burning down. Herr Weidig looked away in the direction of the Yungler home and saw a red glare, growing stronger every moment. He lost no time, but alarmed the village, and in a short time every villager able to walk was headed for the fire. Arrived there some of them rushed boldly into the burning house, and rescued the baby, sleeping calmly in his crib. And in doing so they stumbled over two dead bodies, that of Mrs. Yungler and her eldest son.

Ludwig Yungler was a prosperous man. He owned the Spring Oil Mill, close to the village of Vogelsberg, and



He Struck Her Down With a Clubbed Gun.

a short distance from Weimar. His family consisted of his wife, four sons and the daughter Bertha. Two of the sons attended school at Weimar; the eldest, Herman, assisted in the mill, and the fourth was the baby. All the Yunglers were industrious and economical, and highly respected throughout the countryside. Ludwig had but one weakness, and that was hunting. Whenever possible he took his gun and went to the woods, and his companion on such expeditions was an elderly man named Langoltz, who was a notorious poacher.

In the summer of 1877 the water behind the dam was low, and there was not enough power to run the mill steadily, so Ludwig decided to have the machinery thoroughly overhauled. So he engaged an expert machinist named Reinhardt, who was a stranger in the neighborhood. Reinhardt boarded with the Yunglers, and soon became a favorite of the family. He had fought in the recent war, and had many good stories to tell. He was good to the children, and excellent company for them all. But he was extremely reserved about his own history, and little was known about him, even when he had been in the neighborhood for weeks.

This was the condition of affairs at the oil mill before the fire. That fire destroyed the house and barn, and part of the mill itself; and when the startled neighbors and the authorities had investigated everything, they confronted a baffling mystery. There were the bodies of Frau Yungler and Herman. They had been murdered. The son had been shot, and the mother's skull had been crushed. But where were Ludwig and Reinhardt? There was no sign of them anywhere. Little Bertha, after giving the alarm, had sunk into a condition approaching imbecility, and the doctors refused to have her questioned, saying that her reason would be permanently impaired if she were molested at that time.

The days went by, and still there was no clue to the whereabouts of Ludwig Yungler and the machinist. All sorts of theories were framed up. It

was discovered that Ludwig had drawn a large sum of money from the bank the day before the fire. Perhaps, in collusion with Reinhardt, he had left the country and abandoned his family. But there was no reason why he should murder his wife and son, even if he did that. So one theory after another was taken up and abandoned, and meanwhile every square foot of the countryside was being searched for evidence.

And it throws an interesting light upon circumstantial evidence as an institution that the belief in Reinhardt's guilt grew into a certainty, and everything the man had said and done since his coming to the neighborhood became proof, as of holy writ, that he was the malefactor. Everybody remembered something which, in the light of the murders, demonstrated his evil intentions. His Bertha remained in her disturbed mental condition, it is almost a certainty that the truth would never have been known.

But Bertha regained her faculties under the wise ministrations of the physicians, and when she was able to speak the cloud was lifted from Reinhardt's reputation. She had seen her mother and brother murdered, and the slayers were Langoltz and his son. Her father and Reinhardt had gone away from home early in the evening, and the rest of the family retired at the usual time. Bertha heard a knock at the door and went to the head of the stairs to see who the visitor was. Her mother opened the door, and there stood Langoltz. He struck her down with a clubbed gun. Herman, hearing the noise, emerged from his bedroom and started down the stairs, when Langoltz shot him. Then the poacher entered the house, went to Ludwig's desk, pried it open, and took a roll of gold from it. He saw Bertha, but paid no attention to her; she soon realized why. The son came with an armful of inflammable stuff, scattered it over the floor, and set fire to it. They meant to burn her alive.

When the murderers left the house the brave little girl—she was only ten years old—tried to leave after them, but the floor was all ablaze; with great presence of mind she took blankets from the beds, and spread them before her on the floor, and thus managed to get out of the house, badly scorched, when she ran to Weidig's and then she remembered no more.

Langoltz and his son, against whom there had been no breath of suspicion up to that time, were arrested, and in



their house was found a quantity of gold coin to which their title was not clear. They both protested their innocence when arrested, but the old man practically confessed by committing suicide in his cell. His dead body was found swinging behind the door when the jailer entered his cell, the morning after his arrest.

For a time the younger Langoltz stuck to his story, to the effect that he knew nothing of the murders. And still the fate of Reinhardt and Ludwig remained a mystery. But the solution came in October, two months after the crime. A farmer, plowing one of his fields, turned up a human hand. Then he got a spade and dug and turned up the bodies of the two missing men. They had both been shot, and the machinist's head had been beaten in.

When Langoltz learned of this discovery, and was accused of the murder, he broke down and confessed the whole story, only trying to throw the responsibility on his father. The two of them had learned of the money Yungler had drawn from the bank, and determined to have it. But they were afraid to try robbery at the house while all the members of the family were at home; so they went to Yungler and Reinhardt and told them of a deer they had seen, and invited them to go along and try to get it. Always eager for that variety of sport, Yungler gladly agreed, and induced Reinhardt to go along. When they reached a secluded place, the two poachers lagged behind and shot their victims from the rear. Ludwig dropped dead, but Reinhardt was only wounded, whereupon the older Langoltz clubbed him to death. Then they buried the bodies, and went back and robbed the house, after slaying the mother and son.

This crime shocked the country as it had not been shocked in a hundred years, and in order to efface, as far as possible, all traces of it, the commune of Vogelsberg bought the Yungler property from the heirs, razed all the ruined buildings to the ground, filled up the mill dam, and planted the place to trees.

The younger Langoltz was tried, convicted and beheaded.

INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

(By E. O. SELLERS, Acting Director of Sunday School Course of the Moody Bible Institute, Chicago.)
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LESSON FOR MAY 21

THE CRIPPLE OF LYSTRA.

LESSON TEXT—Acts 14.
GOLDEN TEXT—He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength.—Isa. 40:29.

Make a list of the seven cities mentioned in this lesson and locate them on a map. Let seven pupils attack to the map a flag, or banner, to locate each one. The visit to Iconium occurred probably in the spring of A. D. 47 (Ramsey). Paul and Barnabas had a great triumph and a severe testing at Iconium, wrought a great victory of faith and became popular at Lystra, only to meet great tribulation. On their homeward journey they confirmed saints, set up rules and gave account of their labors to the home church of Antioch.

I. In Iconium (vv. 1-7). This was a Roman city of great antiquity and importance. The modern city Konia is an important Mohammedan and trade center. Tradition says Paul was imprisoned for being a magician and teaching a woman named Thekla not to marry. This woman endured great hardships and trials for the faith, finally becoming a nun at Seleucia and dying at the advanced age of ninety. From this tradition we get most of our ideas of Paul's appearance—small, bandy-legged, large eyed, shaggy eyebrows, long nose; full of grace with sometimes the face of a man and at others of an angel. This is tradition only, but is probably somewhat near the truth. Paul followed his usual first witnessing in the synagogue, witnessing to the entire population, Jew and Gentile, and dividing them effectively by his words about Jesus.

II. In Lystra (vv. 8-21). (1) Popularity (vv. 8-18). Their introduction here would seem propitious, healing the cripple and at once gaining the esteem of the people. Adoration and gratitude appeal to the human heart. Underneath the heathen idea that the gods "came down to us in the likeness of men," is the great and glorious truth of the incarnation (John 1:14; Phil. 2:6, 7). We should hesitate to condemn these men of Lystra too severely, for what American community is not open to condemnation in this regard? Too many Christians offer garlands (v. 13) at the feet of the men whom God has used to work his mighty works. It was common complaint that in the days of his greatest victories, men could not find Mr. Moody when a service was dismissed, or get into his quarters at the hotels; he would give no opportunity for self-glorification. Paul and Barnabas had hard work to restrain these hero worshipers (v. 14), and to convince them who they were and how they had been enabled to accomplish such a wonderful miracle (v. 15). Paul was of "like stature" with them and would not accept worship as did the Caesars or Herod (12:22, 23). He exhorted the Lystrians to turn from "these vain things," i. e., such idol worship, unto the "living God" (see also 1 Cor. 8:4; 1 Thess. 1:9). Hitherto God had not miraculously interfered to turn men from their evil ways (v. 16), but left them to their own devices to show their inability to find their way back to him (see Acts 17:30; 1 Cor. 1:21). Yet God is not "without witnesses" (v. 17). The seasons and the natural laws point to God, yet men still remain blind and ungrateful. Thus by vehement exhortation they prevented this act of sacrilege. (2) Persecution (vs. 19, 20). The mob is ever fickle, (v. 18), but it did not turn them "unto the living God" (v. 15). Conversion is the simple turning from idols (1 Thess. 1:9), a rational thing, but one contrary to the pride of men who desire to "do something" whereby they may merit or can demand their salvation. Even as Paul had difficulty to turn people aside from idols, so today it is hard to keep men and women from idolatry, not the gross or vulgar idolatry of heathenism, but the refined idols of culture, success, power, money and pleasure. To his difficulties Paul had the added persecution of the vindictive iconists and those from Antioch (v. 19). God delivered him from this trial (1 Cor. 11:25, 27). All loyal witnesses must expect persecution from the God-hating world (1 Tim. 3:12; John 15:18-20).

III. The Return (vv. 22-28). "When they had preached the gospel to the city" (v. 21) literally "having evangelized the city," they started home confirming believers and appointing leaders in each center visited. They did not take the short cut of 160 miles to Paul's home in Tarsus, but they visited their new converts. Symbolically the cripple of Lystra is a type of sin, (a) helplessness, (b) born in that condition (Psa. 51:5), (c) had to be helped from without, by outside power (Rom. 5:6); (d) all could see the change (James 2:18). This miracle wrought (a) Praise from the people, (b) Protestation on the part of Paul and Barnabas, (c) Persecution from the scribes and disappointed priests who incited the people. Persecution helped the proclamation of the gospel. Those who believed strengthened Paul by sharing his danger (v. 20) and because of this experience Paul "made many disciples."

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LANSING NOTES

Lansing—Through money made available by the new automobile tax law which was declared constitutional in an opinion rendered by the supreme court Michigan will become one of the foremost states in the union in the matter of highway construction. From the sale of 98,000 automobile licenses, the state has collected so far this year approximately \$1,125,000, all of which will now be turned over to the state and county highway funds and must be used only for the construction and maintenance of highways. Secretary of State Vaughan is of the opinion that at least \$2,000,000 will be received this year from the sale of automobile licenses and as the number of automobiles in Michigan is increasing yearly the state will have millions of dollars for the construction of good roads in years to come. Work in the highway department for the season has not been started as it was deemed advisable to wait and see what the court did with the money which belonged to it under the Newell Smith law. Work which was started last fall on both state reward roads and some township roads on which the state has to pay a reward, was finished this spring, despite the uncertainty of the financial result. The balance due on these road contracts will be the first to come out of the state highway fund when that department finally gets control of it.

The counties and the amounts they will receive on this first payment are as follows: Denzle, \$740; Berrien, \$26,553; Calhoun, \$500; Cass, \$928; Crawford, \$3,179; Dickinson, \$1,986; Eaton, \$1,038; Grand Traverse, \$750; Gratiot, \$1,800; Hillsdale, \$348; Huron, \$5,549; Ingham, \$248; Isabella, \$1,092; Kalamazoo, \$258; Kent, \$3,252; Keweenaw, \$9,272; Lapeer, \$250; Leelanau, \$1,540; Livingston, \$1,719; Luce, \$671; Macomb, \$1,464; Mecos-ta, \$379; Menominee, \$8,325; Midland, \$2,877; Missaukee, \$890; Newaygo, \$300; Oakland, \$3,298; Oceana, \$1,531; Ogemaw, \$1,322; Osceola, \$1,206; Ottawa, \$2,194; Saginaw, \$3,400; Sanilac, \$1,609; Shiawassee, \$996; St. Clair, \$6,726; St. Joseph, \$600; Tuscola, \$3,891; Van Buren, \$5,877; Wayne, \$14,772; Wexford, \$7,215. Total, \$137,565.

Forest Fire Prevention.

When Professor Lovejoy of the University of Michigan, attacked Michigan officials for not stopping forest fires, he, perhaps, did not realize that he was going to bring down about his head the wrath of those in state departments charged with fire prevention and forest protection.

When the members of that public domain commission read that Professor Lovejoy had said they should be charged with the fires and that he was willing to take a contract to prevent them for 2 cents an acre, well, they smiled.

Auditor General Fuller, a member

of the commission, and chairman of its finance committee, took the professor's financial statement and stated emphatically that he was willing to contract with him for 2 cents an acre if he could produce the goods.

A. C. Carlton, secretary of the public domain commission, said he was surprised at Professor Lovejoy's statement, and declared that if every state official in every state should be sent to prison for life, forest fires would not be prevented.

"The matter of forest protection is one of education and is a part of the duty of the individual, who believes in good government," said Mr. Carlton.

"When the camper realizes that his duty is to put out every fire before he leaves it; when the railroad companies realize that when timber is destroyed they will not have it to haul; when the lumbermen and manufacturers realize that the destruction of growing timber by fire will shorten the life of their operations, then we will have reached a point where the loss from fire can be reduced to a minimum.

"Even then we will have fires in our forests, just as we have fires in our cities."

Henry P. Breckinridge, who resigned as assistant secretary of war when Secretary Garrison resigned, is acting as one of the attorneys for the Navy league in its \$100,000 libel suits against Henry Ford.